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BAGHDAD FOR POL, USAID, NCT, POLMIL

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: SALAH AD DIN WANTS PROVINCIAL COUNCIL DISTRICTS

CLASSIFIED BY: Scott Dean, Regional Coordinator (Acting), Reo Kirkuk, Department of State .

REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

¶1. (U) This is a SET Tikrit cable.

SUMMARY

¶2. (C) Salah Ad Din contacts are pushing to elect the next provincial council by district. The January 2005 elections brought 15 Provincial Council members from a single district because of the Sunni boycott. District elections would strengthen the concept of representation. The people making this call include Sunni Arabs, Shia Arabs, Turcomans, and Kurds, they hope to protect each minority's rights. But, more importantly, major parties, such as the IAW, will be able to add support through the home town message being told by their nominees across the province.

MANY VOICES, ONE MESSAGE

¶3. (C) Since the beginning of February, SET contacts have been saying they want to elect the next Salah ad Din Provincial Council this summer by district. The Deputy Governor, BG Abdullah Hussein Mohammed, told SET that voting by districts, rather than a slate province-wide, would give citizens a larger voice in their political future. He said people throughout the province believe that voting for people from their area would give them a stronger feeling of democracy. BG Abdullah came away from his IVP Federalism trip to the United States in 2005 impressed with governors' and congressional representatives' dedication to their home areas. Governor Sheikh Hamad Hamud Shukti made a passing comment to SET about the need for people to vote for men they knew.

¶4. (C) The leadership at a Political Action Committee meeting also opined that districts were far better than any other kind of province-wide voting system. All in this meeting, which represents at least 15 political entities in Salah Ad Din Province, agreed.

COMMENT

¶6. (C) Salah Ad Din's enthusiasm for district voting is easy to explain: the January 2005 elections brought 15 Provincial Council members from a single district because of the Sunni boycott. With 15 of 42 provincial council members coming from

Tozhkurmato, Sunni Arabs now represent less than 50% of the provincial council members, while representing about 80% of the provincial population. Moving to district voting will allow the Kurds and Turcomans to have their voice from the east, the Shia their voice from Balad, and Sunni Arabs from the other six areas. The focus on having a hometown person could boost tribal leaders' chances for nomination.

17. (C) Citizens have been increasing their political participation since the January 2005 elections. Ever since the October referendum, they have been looking ahead to the next political process, trying to determine how to get the most out of it. Salah ad Din is ready for a new provincial council, one which is forward-thinking and will bring economic development to the province. District-based elections will push off the stage smaller parties with thin support across the province. Geographically concentrated minorities may pick up some seats. The real winners, though, will be the larger political parties, like the Iraqi Accordance Front. They'll add the home town draw to their national platform, garnering perhaps an outright majority in the provincial council.

ORESTE